

# **SUPERFUND**

## **Fact Sheet**

### **MOSES LAKE WELLFIELD** *Moses Lake, Washington*



**U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY REGION 10**

**June 1999**

*During the week of July 12, 1999, contractors for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) will begin installing 25 monitoring wells on and near the Moses Lake Wellfield Contamination Superfund site. The work is the result of an agreement (called the Interagency Agreement (IAG) to Perform Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study), signed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Defense in March 1999, that will lead to the final cleanup of the site. The USACE, representing the U.S. Department of Defense, will carry out the terms of the agreement with oversight by EPA.*

### **The Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS)**

The RI/FS are two related studies usually performed at the same time intended to gather data necessary to determine the type and extent of contamination at a site; establish criteria for cleaning up the site; identify alternatives for cleanup; and analyze in detail the technology and costs of the alternatives.

The investigation will provide information needed to determine the extent of trichloroethylene (TCE) contamination in the Moses Lake area from the former Larson Air Force Base (LAFB). Also, the investigation will determine where the contamination is moving in the groundwater. In addition, information is needed about whether other public or private wells are or could become contaminated, and if there are any active sources contributing to the TCE problem. EPA and USACE will also evaluate various technologies to remove or control the TCE in the groundwater. The RI/FS will be made available when the investigations and evaluations are completed.

### **Sampling of Private Domestic Wells**

Based on previous sampling, EPA has a fairly good idea of where the groundwater is contaminated above safe levels. This contaminated area is known as the plume. It is important to sample a large number of private wells to determine how far the contamination has spread, and to determine if the contamination is affecting anyone's well water. Therefore, in July, EPA and USACE will begin sampling private domestic wells outside the plume area.

In May 1998, EPA sampled 22 private wells outside the former air force base and did not find any wells with TCE contamination above safe levels. We expect that the testing in July will not turn up many contaminated wells. However, the area around the old base is large and we need to sample about 30 to 50 more wells to verify that the Moses Lake community is not drinking TCE contaminated water.

If we find that someone's well water is contaminated with TCE, bottled water will be provided immediately by USACE. In addition, USACE will work with those people to provide a long-term source of safe water. People whose wells are found to be contaminated are not held responsible for the contamination.



## Background

The Moses Lake Wellfield Contamination site, an area of about 15 square miles, is located about three miles northwest of the City of Moses Lake, Washington. The area surrounding the site is residential, agricultural and commercial. The site contains a plume of TCE-contaminated groundwater approximately one mile wide, three miles long, and from 100 to 300 feet deep underlying and extending south of the former Larson Air Force Base (LAFB); TCE-contaminated water systems; and areas that are the sources contributing to the TCE contamination.

The United States Air Force used the site for a variety of purposes from 1942 until the mid 1960s, when LAFB was disbanded and put up for sale. Currently, the Port of Moses Lake owns most of the former LAFB, operating a large portion as the Grant County Municipal Airport. The Port also leases space to a variety of commercial enterprises.

Nearly all investigations into potential sources of contamination have centered on the former LAFB because it is near the contaminated wells, and has a long history of TCE use for cleaning parts and aircraft. TCE, a volatile organic chemical which at high levels is known to cause adverse health affects in humans, is commonly used as a degreaser in manufacturing and aircraft maintenance.

Elevated TCE levels were found in some of the Moses Lake municipal wells and the two Skyline wells during sampling done by the Washington Departments of Ecology, and Social and Health Services (now DOH) in 1988 and 1989. In 1992, EPA added the Moses Lake Wellfield Contamination site to the National Priorities List of hazardous waste sites across the country that need further investigation and cleanup.

The City of Moses Lake protected the users of the municipal water system by closing the contaminated municipal wells or relocating them in a deeper uncontaminated aquifer. The Port of Moses Lake provided bottled water to Skyline users for the past five years. The USACE has recently agreed to take over the distribution of bottled water until a permanent solution can be implemented.

## For More Information

The Interagency Agreement to Perform the Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study and other documents pertaining to the Moses Lake site are available for your review at the

**Moses Lake Community Library,**  
418 East Fifth Avenue,

and at the

**EPA Records Center,**  
7th floor, 1200 Sixth Avenue in Seattle.

If you have questions about the site, please call

**Lynda Priddy,** Project Manager,  
at (206) 553-1987,

**Jean Baker,**  
Community Involvement Coordinator,  
at (206) 553-2587.

For questions about the Interagency Agreement, please call

**Dean Ingemansen,** Regional Counsel,  
at (206) 553-1744.

The above contacts can also be reached by calling EPA's toll-free number, 800-424-4372.

*To ensure effective communication with everyone, additional services can be made available to persons with disabilities by contacting one of the numbers listed above.*





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Environmental Protection  
Agency

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***Moses Lake Wellfield Contamination Site***  
***Moses Lake, Washington***